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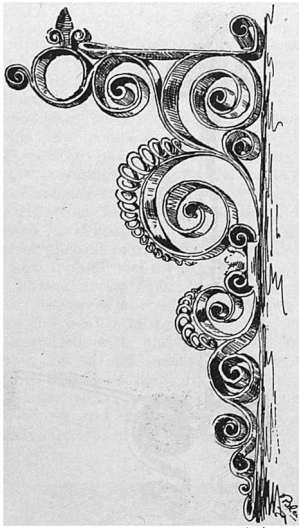
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house, and now well known as being naturally endowed with an artistic sense of design and a knowledge of how to handle tools, intends to push the decorative art iron business. We have got to grow and find out our good qualities, and by discovering and mending our errors become proficient. As in the world of art, American painters are everywhere styled "the greatest living colorists," so we may yet find, in time, that our blacksmiths will forge ahead and show the world we are more than in a renaissance art condition.

### THREE ROOMS AND A HALL.

BY MARY GAY HUMPHREYS.

AT Mamaroneck on the Sound, the walls of its grounds rising out of the water, stands the country seat recently built by McKim, Meade & White, for Mr. Charles J. Osborne. The architecture, after some French chateau, with gables and towers and now its gray granite and irregular lines against the foliage, still in its autumn tints, makes one of the conspicuous sights of the Sound.

Within, the house presents three interesting examples of individual decoration. We enter the main hall from the *porte cochère*. It rises square with overhanging gallery to the roof. On one side is the carved mantel of old oak rising to the second floor, rich with carving and significant legends.

The hall is paneled in old oak, and the decoration proper does not begin until the ceiling is reached. This is by Mr. Francis Lathrop and in a manner now identified with him. The center of the hall is laid in parallel beams. Between these are panels of colored ornament in soft iridescent tints, blues, greens, reds, and yellows. In this ornament, although seen from below, there is a feeling of modeling. It is in fact modeled, although the work of the brush. This is after a process by Mr. Lathrop.

The panels are of canvas, the ornament is applied with the brush, the material being a sort of composition of sufficient coherence to be used in low relief. Over this color is applied in which metallic tints have their value. The outer panels, those which surround these parallel beams, are larger and the ornament is more conspicuous. The whole tone, however, is kept quiet and rich, and enters into harmony with the tone of the oak.

Leading from this main hall is a small reception room and boudoir, which has been the work of Mr. T. N. Dewing. It is a dainty room in size and decoration. The walls are paneled in white, picked out with gold, a series of corrugations by no means conspicuous.

The principal decoration is in Mr. Dewing's ceiling. This consists of a center panel and small surrounding panels which have the effect of openings in the white wooden framework. The room seems sacred to Spring. In the center panel are three floating figures, graceful women in light draperies of blue and pink, holding ribbons aloft. The composition and the color are very lovely and strike a blithe joyous note. The effect would have been better

if the ceiling had been somewhat higher, it being low for decoration of such magnitude.

The exterior panels present the charming effect of looking through leafy screens which filter the sunlight. Passing through these are white ribbons tinged with pale green reflections, on which are dulcet Italian lines. Out-of-door effects never seem the most appropriate decoration for interiors, although the celestial homes of gods and goddesses have been so long domesticated with us. But in Mr. Dewing's ceiling, with its freshness and care, translucent greens do not lose their decorative value in their home-like suggestion of nature and sunny days.

Under the conical roof of the Norman tower overlooking the water is the room which was assigned to Mr. Robert Blum. If any one has ever observed those cloud-like ridges of neutral color conspicuous in Japanese decoration, he will have found the germ of Mr. Blum's work. These ridges circle around the room in clouds of neutral grays. On these grays appear to rest a bloom of blue and pink, and are thus differentiated. These deepen toward the top and their irregular boundaries are marked by a narrow silvered cord. Toward the pointed apex the color becomes darker, and one might say threatening. Raising their heads suddenly three gilded dragons meet at the summit. There is a curious sensation, an almost dramatic surprise in the appearance of three dragons so full of angry life. The tone of the room is quiet and most agreeable, the design novel and curious.

The third room is the joint work of Miss Kate and Miss Eleanor Greatorex, two artists whose easel work is well known, but who have never appeared before as decorators. So quietly and with so little pretension has their work been done that the doing of it has been, in itself, a surprise. The room, which was given to them unreservedly, is the reception room in the new apartment house, the Dakota, which has anticipated the march of this city and is an imposing structure reared at the entrance of Central Park, on Seventy-third street and Eighth avenue.

As in Mr. Dewing's room, nature has furnished the model, but the effect is purely decorative. The walls have a greenish gray tone, and have been worked throughout by the palette knife applying the color over the underlying silver. The result is a net work of tints, exquisite in texture as in tone, and altogether novel. The frieze is broad in light warm creamy tint. The decoration is taken from the clematis vine. The drawing and the composition follow, one might say, the wantonness of nature.

No better idea can be gained of the feeling of the decoration than by imagining the leafy luxuriance of the vine with its delicate blossoms in strong sunlight casting tangled shadows. The gradations of tint in the foliage, the gradations of tint in the shadows which fall athwart the satin, unite in decorative color as well as form, in which the shadows give valuable account. Above the frieze the cove is in gold and leaves and branches of vine at random, but well balanced, serve as ornament. The ceiling is in plain, soft, flat tint. The scheme of the decoration of the room con-

tinues with the draperies, which hang in portières and from the windows.

These are of satin, the ground tint of the frieze, and carry the sunlight effect to the floor. On these the vine swings in the abandon of nature with falling shadows. These draperies are painted and it is to be remarked that they have none of that disagreeable glistening effect of paint on satin. As such detail of the room has been considered by these ladies, it is worth adding that the satin hangings drape half of each of the windows, falling in straight folds to the floor. The other half is covered with heavy curtains of deep bluish green plush and are looped back—an arrangement of line most agreeable.

### THE DECORATIVE INSTINCT.

WHILE it is true that decoration may be affected and carried to extremes, nothing is more absurd than the wholesale denunciation of domestic decoration that one hears now and then, even from artists, on the score of its unnaturalness. It is not unnatural. The decorative instinct is implanted in every human breast, savage and civilized, and is even shared in some degree by certain of the lower animals. It is as certain a human factor as a conscience.

As far back as human history can be read, we find evidences of the assertion of the decorative instinct, perhaps only in the shape of a stone implement, the polish of a bead, or the scratching of a mastodon's portrait on the ivory of his own trunk. Our progenitors, who, Colonel Ingersoll says, were gentlemen of phenomenally tough skulls and a spoonful of brains apiece, could spare time from hunting and fighting to carve and polish their clubs and spears and paint their jars of clay.

They also discovered the inter-dependence of decorative symmetry and utility; for, without symmetry our houses and ships would be unsafe, and many inventions that have aided in developing civilization out of barbarism, would not be extant; wherefore art, studied in its economic aspects, has been the means not only of educating but of insuring safety and convenience.

The art of a nation, pictorial, plastic, and decorative, grows with its intellectual growth, and is a normal and palpable part of it. Enter a house, the work of the artist is in everything; in the colors and patterns of carpet and wall paper; in the shapes and upholstery of furniture; in the moldings of ceiling and wood work; in the binding of books; in the flowers at the window; in the lamps, gas fixtures, table ware, and door panels.

Enter a church, the decorator shows himself in the colored glass, the frescoes, the carvings of pulpit and gallery front, the gilding and tinting of the organ pipes. It is even a decorative instinct that induces us to brush our hair and black our boots. Yet the importance of art as a civilizing function is only beginning to be fully realized, while its strictly utilitarian and industrial aspects and advantages are not yet well understood or appreciated. As an educative force it is also worthy of regard, and its home influence is refining and elevating.

Happily, in these times, it is essential to have beauty in our homes, and even the Philistine and parvenu realize the force and justice of what society demands in this respect, though their *carte blanche* to professional decorators is less to be commended than the slow but certain growth of beauty in our surroundings as a result of improvement in our own tastes. It is not difficult to make our homes as bright to the eye and restful to the senses as they are dear to the heart.

That we might advance the more rapidly in appreciation and knowledge, industrial art should be taught in our schools, and our galleries and museums should be open on Sundays. When we know beauty we can invite it into our homes, and the expense of entertaining it there is small in consideration of the enjoyment received from it. Money spent in making home worth living in is as well invested as if it were put in a bank to guard against the poorhouse, for whoever lives in a cheerless and unattractive home lives in a poorhouse already. Those who lay up money for their old age should consider what sort of an old age they are going to lay up for their money. Put art into the home then; it has the same natural right there as sunlight and fresh air, and not only does it please the eye, but it expresses the higher aspirations and raises and chastens all who come in contact with it.

It is one of the most satisfactory signs of the times that the trade in cheap chromos is dead. The chromo has found its level as a medium of advertising. It never was a work of art.

